

MEMORIAL
OF
THE LEGISLATURE OF THE TERRITORY OF OREGON,
PRAYING

The confirmation of the land titles of the settlers in that Territory, and for the adoption of measures for the promotion of education, and for facilitating the navigation of the Columbia river.

DECEMBER 8, 1847.
Read, and ordered to be printed.

Memorial of the representatives of the people of Oregon in legislature assembled, December, 1846.

To the honorable the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled:

Your memorialists, the representatives of the people of Oregon in legislature assembled, do respectfully solicit that the following subjects herein contained may claim the attention and sympathy of your honorable body:

Oregon is so situated that it will, ere long, occupy an enviable position amongst the civilized portions of the world; in proof of which, permit us to refer your honorable body to the report of the Committee, in the United States Congress, on the Post Office and Post Roads, April the 20th, 1846, wherein are fully set forth the salubrity of its climate and the fertility of its soil, as well as the many other advantages bestowed by nature's God on this favored portion of his earth; which, although three thousand miles distant from the United States, seems destined soon to become a central point of commerce and happiness.

We here beg to insert the following statement, representing the eligibility of the Columbia river as a quarter from whence supplies could be furnished for the navy cruising in the Pacific.

Breadstuffs could be supplied in large quantities, and on short notice—say five thousand barrels of flour, or part in biscuit, if preferred. Salt beef and pork, should a demand arise, could also be prepared—say by 1st May, 1848, three thousand barrels salt beef and two thousand barrels salt pork.

The above estimates, of flour particularly, are guardedly moderate. Let but markets open, and our productive powers would rapidly increase. Lumber can always be supplied in abundance, and tar and pitch could soon be manufactured, if such should be required by the navy. In connexion with this subject, it will be proper to mention that flax and hemp
Tippin & Streeper, printers.

have been successfully cultivated in small quantities, and could be made articles of export, were encouragement offered.

Many of us have been induced to seek homes in this remote Territory from promises held out by some action of your honorable body. Our population is of a character to be envied by older settled countries; but, at the same time, we would not presume on the wisdom of Congress by saying, give us land. Those amongst us who have overcome the difficulties of the journey to Oregon, as well as those who first encouraged agriculture and civilization by their early settlements in this country, here conjointly submit to the impartial judgment of your honorable body their claims on government to secure them in their homes. We, however, think we have some right to expect a grant of land; not only we ourselves, but those who may immigrate for the next few years. Many of us are settled under the provisions of the organic law, which provides that any person is entitled to hold six hundred and forty acres of land. The claims, as we call them, are taken up, in accordance with the above-named laws, either in a square or oblong form, and some portions of the country are entirely occupied. Should, therefore, your honorable body, in its wisdom, conclude to sanction our title to these claims, we hope we may be permitted to hold them as now located, otherwise great inconvenience and hardship must necessarily result.

On the subject of education, your memorialists would beg to present for your honorable consideration, that in this, as in the settlement of all new countries, insurmountable barriers present themselves to the general diffusion of education. That the unavoidable sparsity of settlements, and the numerous pecuniary inconveniences, offer but limited inducements to competent preceptors, is a fact but too apparent. Upon the consideration, therefore, that the general diffusion of knowledge is among the leading principles of a government founded upon liberal and epublican principles like that of the United States, (which government we are prayerfully awaiting to be extended over us,) where the people, not only in semblance, but in reality, have the care of their political institutions, and as their ability to exercise that power in a manner that will be most conducive to the prosperity and preservation thereof depends materially upon the general diffusion of education—we say, upon these considerations, and in view of the disadvantages under which we labor, your memorialists most respectfully beg to suggest the propriety of adopting some measures which shall have for their tendency the removal of those barriers above mentioned, and place a sound elementary education within the reach of all. Your memorialists will not pretend to devise ways and means, but, presuming upon the known liberality of the enlightened government of the United States, we fondly cherish the hope that, ere long, we may receive that timely assistance which has invariably been afforded by liberal grants of land and otherwise, in different portions of the Union.

The difficulty of sailing vessels navigating the "Columbia," on their upward passage during the winter season, and the dangers to be encountered by them in crossing the bar of that river, is another subject to which we would most sincerely and respectfully solicit the attention of your honorable body.

No greater drawback has, perhaps, as yet presented itself to the welfare of our community, than the tardy movements of ship owners in sending vessels to this river, whereby we might be enabled to dispose of the produce of

our lands, and prevent those unavoidably high prices, on the part of the merchant, to which we are at present subject.

The reluctance on the part of merchants, above alluded to, is doubtless caused, in a great measure, by the risk to which merchandise is subject in crossing the bar, and the loss of time and expense consequently incurred by sailing-craft in arriving at their destination.

The causes of the difficulties to which we have reference are as follows: That, with respect to crossing the bar, a vessel is under the necessity, from the intricacy of the passage, to await what is generally termed a fair wind, and also, in most cases, a particular stage of the tide; she is subject both to natural calms, and calms caused by Cape Disappointment and the adjacent highlands; as also the influence of numerous currents setting towards different points, according to the stage of tide.

During five months of the year, we may say that the wind almost universally blows down the river, so that an inward bound vessel usually takes from one to two months in advancing a distance of one hundred miles, or from the entrance of the "Columbia" to Portland, on the Willamette river.

A more detailed description of the intricate navigation of this river, we presume, would be superfluous, as the journals of Commodore Wilkes, Captain Belcher, and others, have doubtless come under the observation of your honors. We have, during our present session, done our utmost for the safety of vessels, in establishing a pilotage; but at the same time are of opinion that nothing but the aid of steam vessels will save that loss of labor, time, and property, of which we speak.

We, therefore, your memorialists, would most earnestly petition your honorable body for the use of a steam tow-boat, which might enable vessels either to enter or leave the river at all seasons, and be of infinite service in the navigation of the stream itself.

Before closing this, our memorial, we cannot but express, with mixed astonishment and admiration, our high estimation of a grand project, (the news of which has found its way to Oregon,) by the memorial of George Wilkes, esq., for a railroad from the Atlantic to the Pacific ocean. That such a thing should exist cannot but be obvious to every person, particularly to those who have travelled from the United States to Oregon; and although some years may roll by before the completion of this great undertaking, yet we shall anxiously look forward to the time when, by such a work, commerce shall stride with gigantic steps over those wild and solitary regions now known only as the hunting grounds of the trapper or the red man.

In conclusion, your humble memorialists having presented for your consideration some of the most important subjects to the prosperity and well doing of our adopted country, do most earnestly and respectfully pray that they may meet such reception and consideration as shall redound to the peace and prosperity of all interested, and the furtherance of an attachment to the government of the United States of America that shall cease only with our existence: and your memorialists, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

A. LAWRENCE LOVEJOY, *Speaker.*

Attest:

N. HUBER, *Clerk.*

